



Pennsylvania Delaware Chapter
Association for the Education and Rehabilitation
of the Blind and Visually Impaired

Dear Administrator or Supervisor:

The Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER) is a membership organization for professionals serving individuals of all ages who are blind or visually impaired. In fact, it is THE ONLY membership organization specifically for professionals who provide services to people with visual impairments.

The mission of AER is to support professionals who provide education and rehabilitation services to people with visual impairments by offering professional development opportunities, publications, and public advocacy.

As with all professional associations, the primary purpose of AER and its Penn-Del Chapter is to provide ongoing professional development opportunities. This is accomplished through a well-organized and well respected annual conference at the chapter level and a biannual conference on the national level. These conferences provide new information that is needed by professionals in this area, and they provide opportunities for the professionals themselves to develop and present their own ideas, a very important growth experience for all of us.

The Penn-Del Chapter is also active in recruiting and encouraging new people in our profession and rewarding those who have made important contributions in their careers. Scholarships are provided to promising students who have chosen to study in this area. Students who are currently enrolled in university programs specializing in vision services are involved in the annual chapter conference and welcomed into the profession.

Active participation in the chapter as a conference attendee, a presenter, a committee member, a Board member, or an officer provides the kind of professional growth opportunities that can be instrumental in helping teachers and other direct service providers prepare for increased responsibilities as they mature in their professions. The contacts that are made through such participation also serve to encourage and reward further engagement in the profession which can produce additional benefits for the member's school or agency.

AER and its Penn-Del Chapter also provide vehicles through which professionals in the field of visual impairment can actively participate in the development and shaping of public policy at the state and national level. This advocacy can influence the availability of funding for programs for visually impaired individuals as well as funding for the training of additional professionals.

For all of these reasons, I am writing to you to ask you to encourage your professional vision staff to consider active membership in AER and its Penn-Del Chapter. Such participation can be of benefit to

all of your staff and subsequently to your program. However, this participation can be especially valuable for staff that you see as the up and coming leaders of your program for the future. Experience in serving as a leader within the chapter can be great preparation for leadership in your program and in helping your staff experience the personal and professional satisfaction that comes with success and leadership.

Please consider the value and importance of participation in AER for your staff. Encourage them to get involved with us in our efforts to improve services for children and adults who are blind or visually impaired and those who serve them. If you have additional questions about AER or about this request, please feel free to contact me at christie.a.peel@gmail.com. You will find additional information on the Penn-Del AER website at www.penn-delaer.org.

Sincerely,

Christie Peel, President

Penn-Del Chapter of AER

CP/DOH 7-2-13